

[1 March, 2007]

RAJYA SABHA

- (d) whether any initiative has been taken by Government in this regard;
- (e) if so, the details thereof; and
- (f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) No. According to some initial media reports alleged 'racist' remarks had been directed at Ms. Shilpa Shetty (Indian actor, who was participating in the reality show 'Celebrity Big Brother' on Channel 4, UK) by her co-contestants.

However, on January 18, 2007, Ms. Shilpa Shetty was herself quoted as telling the programme organizers "*I don't feel there was any racial discrimination*". Again in an interview on the Sky News on February 1, 2007, she was quoted as saying "*I think it stemmed from jealousy, maybe insecurity, you know, but definitely wasn't contrived racism.*"

(c) Yes, The issue was raised in the British Parliament by Mr. Keith Vaz, Member of Parliament, in an Early Day Motion (EDM 639) titled 'Allegation of Racist Behaviour on Big Brother' on January 16, 2007.

(d) and (e) Yes. On January 18, 2007, in view of the controversy as reported in the media, Ministry of External Affairs took up the matter with the British High Commission in New Delhi and asked the British Government to take action under its laws.

(f) Does not arise.

Vote for Venezuela

326. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the United States of America had made a request to India not to vote for Venezuela in the election for non-permanent members of United Nations Security Council;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the decision taken by India in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) Elections for non-permanent seats of the UN

Security Council are held by secret ballot in the UN General Assembly which comprises all member States. The non-permanent seat from the Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC) for 2007-2008 was contested by Venezuela and Guatemala. As is normal, both the candidates and their supporters canvassed the support of the member States, including India. As on any other foreign policy issue, Government of India took an independent decision in this matter.

People in slums in metro cities

†327. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the number of people living in slums have increased in the metro cities of the country specially in the cities having ten lacs population during last five years;

(b) if so, the facts in this regard;

(c) the names of metropolis have population of ten lacs and the number of people living in slums separately; and

(d) the average per capita availability of land in these metropolis?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION (KUMARI SELJA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. As per 2001 census, about 17.7 million population lives in slums in the cities having 10 lakh population or above, which is about 41.6% of the total slum population in the country.

(c) List is given in Statement (See below).

(d) Urban development being a State subject, no such data is maintained by the Government of India.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.